

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 TRSE-00 /092 W
-----009378 031749Z /43

P 031720Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4449
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
USMISSION USNATO
USMISSION GENEVA

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USEEC AND USOECD ALSO FOR EMBASSIES

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, SP
SUBJECT: SPANISH MAY DAY: BASICALLY TRANQUIL AND ORDERLY

REF: MADRID 4503

1. APART FROM SOME SCATTERED INCIDENTS, ORDER AND
TRANQUILLITY PREVAILED AS SPANISH WORKERS CELEBRATED THE
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FIRST COMPLETELY FREE AND LEGAL MAY 1 LABOR DAY IN FORTY-
ONE YEARS. OBSERVERS WERE ALMOST UNANIMOUS IN COMMENT-
ING UPON THE "NEAR NORMALCY" THROUGHOUT SPAIN, AND COM-
PLIMENTING THE PRINCIPAL TRADE UNIONS FOR THEIR SENSE OF
"RESPONSIBILITY" AND "MATURITY". INTERIOR MINISTRY
SOURCES ESTIMATED THAT JUST UNDER ONE MILLION PARTICIPATED
IN 210 PARADES, 60 RALLIES, AND 40 OPEN-AIR FIESTAS

NATIONWIDE. THE SOCIALIST UGT AND COMMUNIST-DOMINATED WORKERS' COMMISSIONS (CC.OO)--JOINT SPONSORS OF THE LARGEST EVENTS--CLAIMED 6 TO 7 MILLION PARTICIPANTS NATIONWIDE.

2. WITH SOME EXCEPTIONS (SEE BELOW), DISCRETELY PLACED SECURITY FORCES WERE NOT NEEDED AS EFFECTIVE TRADE UNION CROWD MARSHALLS (ESTIMATED AT OVER 10,000 EACH IN BOTH MADRID AND BARCELONA) KEPT THINGS UNDER CONTROL. THE FEW INCIDENTS THAT DID TAKE PLACE WERE PROVOKED BY EXTREMIST ELEMENTS (BASQUE ETA, FRAP, MISCELLANEOUS ANARCHIST ELEMENTS, ETC.) IN PAMPLONA, VALLADOLID, BILBAO AND VALENCIA. THESE INCIDENTS INVOLVED SOME MOLOTOV COCKTAILS DISPLAY OF REPUBLICAN AND OTHER BANNED FLAGS, AND OUT AND OUT EXTREMIST ATTEMPTS TO PROVOKE VIOLENCE.

3. IN MADRID, THE UGT/CC.OO-SPONSORED PARADE (ALSO SUPPORTED BY MAOIST CSUC AND INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST USO) ATTRACTED SOME 170,000 (900,000 BY TRADE UNION COUNT). THE 2 TO 3 HOUR RALLY WENT OFF VERY PEACEFULLY, THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE PROCEEDINGS BEING BRIEF ADDRESSES BY CC.OO. SECGEN CAMACHO, UGT SECGEN REDONDO, PSOE SECGEN FELIPE GONZALEZ, AND PCE SECGEN CARRILLO. IN TWO OTHER SEPARATE EVENTS IN MADRID, THE MAOIST SU MUSTERED SOME 6,000, AND SUPPORTERS OF THE ANARCHO-SYNDICAL CNT GATHERED IN THE MADRID SECTOR OF CARABANCHEL. SOME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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150 CNT'ERS WHO TRIED TO MARCH TO THE CARABANCHEL PRISON (SITE OF EARLIER PRISONER RIOTS) WERE DISPERSED BY POLICE.

4. OUR CONSULATES IN BARCELONA, BILBAO, AND SEVILLA REPORTED AS FOLLOWS REGARDING MAY DAY ACTIVITIES IN THEIR AREAS. IN BARCELONA, CAPITAL OF THE CATALAN INDUSTRIAL AREA, SOME 100-120,000 PARADED VERY CALMLY IN A JOINT UGT-CC.OO. AFFAIR. THE CIVIL GOVERNOR CONGRATULATED THE UNIONS FOR "THEIR EXAMPLE OF CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY." TRADE UNION CROWD MARSHALLS DID VERY WELL, AND THERE WAS NO POLICE INTERVENTION. SOME FEW INCIDENTS WERE PROVOKED BY RADICAL EXTREMIST PCE/I ELEMENTS. CATALANS IN GENERAL TOOK PRIDE AND SATISFACTION THAT THINGS WENT SO WELL. A SEPARATE CNT RALLY WAS ALSO QUIET, AS THAT UNION TOOK VERBAL POTSHOTS AT OTHER LABOR ORGANIZATIONS.

5. AS IS USUALLY THE CASE, THE BASQUE REGION (WITH AN ESTIMATED 100,000 PARADERS) PROVIDED MOST OF THE FIREWORKS, ALTHOUGH THE AREA WAS BY AND LARGE CALM. A SPANISH FLAG-BURNING INCIDENT IN PAMPLONA RESULTED IN 22 INJURED INCLUDING TWO POLICE, AND THE CITY WAS STILL PRETTY MUCH IN AN UPROAR ON MAY 2. THE DISPLAY OF BANNED REPUBLICAN

FLAGS AMONG THE 25,000 MARCHERS ALSO ADDED TO THE TURMOIL IN PAMPLONA WHICH HAS THE REPUTATION OF BEING THE MOST INCIDENT-PRONE CITY IN THE BASQUE REGION. IN BILBAO, SOME 50,000 MARCHED PEACEFULLY, ALTHOUGH SOME BASQUE EXTREMISTS (CAS/ETA-FRONT) AND ANARCHISTS ATTEMPTED TO PROVOKE PNV ELEMENTS DURING THE ADDRESS OF PSOE LEADER RAMON RUBIAL (PRESIDENT OF THE BASQUE GENERAL COUNCIL). THE RALLY IN SAN SEBASTION WAS PEACEFUL. IN GENERAL, THEN, THE BASQUE RALLIES WENT OFF WELL--DESPITE THE USUAL ETA SHOUTS FOR INDEPENDENCE--AND THERE WERE RELATIVELY BIG

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TURNOUTS. THE CNT AND THE BASQUE STV DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE MAY DAY EVENTS.

6. IN SEVILLA (ANDALUCIA), THE UGT-CC.OO. DEMONSTRATION HAD ABOUT 15,000 PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO CIVIL GOVT ESTIMATES (ORGANIZERS CLAIMED AROUND 80,000), AND

WAS CALM. A SEPARATE RALLY ORGANIZED BY THE CNT, USO, AND MAOIST CSUT AND SU, DREW A SCANT 3,000 THOUGH THE ORGANIZERS AGAIN CLAIMED CONSIDERABLY MORE. THERE WAS MUCH WAVING OF RED FLAGS/GREEN-WHITE ANDALUCIAN BANNERS AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SINGING OF THE INTERNATIONAL, BUT THE DEMONSTRATION BROKE UP WITHOUT INCIDENT. OFFICIAL ESTIMATES INDICATE AROUND 75,000 TOOK PART FOR ALL OF ANDALUCIA, PARTICULARLY IN THE PROVINCIAL CAPITALS (I.E. MALAGA 4,000; CORDOBA 10,000; CADIZ 3,000; GRANADA 5,000; JAEN 2,000; HUELVA 5-6,000; AND

7. FINALLY, IN VALENCIA, ABOUT 10,000 PARTICIPATED IN THE JOINT UGT-CC.-USO MAY DAY PARADE. AN INCIDENT OCCURRED WHEN SOME 20 TO 30 FRAP EXTREMISTS ATTEMPTED TO CUT IN FRONT OF THE MARCHERS. THIS LED TO POLICE INTERVENTION AND ONE FRAP SUPPORTER AND TWO POLICE WERE SLIGHTLY INJURED. A SMALLER JOINT CNT-AIT RALLY IN VALENCIA WAS CALM.

8. IN SUM, IT WOULD SEEM THAT BY AND LARGE, SPAIN LIVED UP TO THE CONFIDENCE EXPRESSED BY LABOR MINISTER CALVO ORTEGA ON THE EVE OF MAY 1 LABOR DAY. HE SAID: "I LOOK WITH SERENITY AND ABSOLUTE CONFIDENCE TO THE CELEBRATION OF THIS FIRST OF MAY, AS I HAVE THE ASSURANCE THAT THE SPANISH TRADE UNIONS--WHO ARE GIVING PROOF OF GREAT RESPONSIBILITY--WILL ONCE AGAIN SHOW THEIR MATURITY". STABLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, MAY DAY, LABOR UNIONS, COMMEMORATIVE CELEBRATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MADRID04798
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780189-0063
Format: TEL
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780598/aaaadfm.tel
Line Count: 201
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: dc3723a5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 MADRID 4503
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2806172
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SPANISH MAY DAY: BASICALLY TRANQUIL AND ORDERLY
TAGS: ELAB, SP
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/dc3723a5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014